

Remarks

Receipt is acknowledged of the Final Office Action mailed January 12, 2005. Claim 1 has been amended; however, no new matter has been introduced. Accordingly, claims 1-7 would be pending upon entry of this amendment.

Priority

Applicants respectfully request acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and the associated filing of a certified copy of Korean Patent Application No. 10-2003-0034843. A certified copy of this Korean patent application, along with a claim for priority, were filed in the United States Patent and Trademark Office on December 8, 2003 in accordance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 119(b). A copy of the foreign priority claim is attached hereto as an Appendix for the Examiner's convenience. Accordingly, acknowledgment of receipt of such claim for foreign priority and associated filing of a certified copy is respectfully requested in the next office communication.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,251,774 to Harada et al. ("Harada" hereafter). Claims 1-4 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0192945 to Nagahara ("Nagahara" hereafter). Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,642,153 to Chang et al. ("Chang" hereafter). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

The Office Action of 1/12/05 states on pgs. 9-10, note 15:

In response to Applicant's remarks, pages 8-11 of the amendment, where Applicant states that the references do not show the exposed portion of the first etch barrier film to expose the lower metal line *prior* to forming the upper metal line region, the broadest interpretation of the claim is not precluded by this statement. The claim does not contain this limitation in that the steps do not preclude the exposure step being performed after the upper metal line region is formed.

Claim 1 has been amended accordingly to explicitly recite forming an upper metal line contacting a lower metal line *after* the photoresist film is removed. As this issue was previously

considered by the Examiner, it does not raise any new issues by way of amending claim 1. Thus, entry of the amendment to claim 1 is solicited.

As amended, claims 1-4 are believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth in the 11/3/04 Amendment & Reply. Allowance of claims 1-4 is solicited.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Harada in view of Chang, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,521,524 to Wang ("Wang" hereafter).

Claims 5-7 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagahara in view of Chang, further in view of Wang. Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chang in view of Wang.

Claims 5-7 are dependent upon claim 1, and believed to be allowable for at least the aforementioned reasons with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the entry of this amendment to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Applicants also respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned for any reason related to the advancement of this case. The Commissioner is authorized to credit any over payment or charge any deficient to deposit account number 08-1641.

Respectfully submitted,
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